

## **Living Safely with Moose**

Moose are the most widely seen large game animal in Alaska, and reside on all military installations in the state. It is not unusual to see these large animals feeding along roads and in yards in downtown Fairbanks or Anchorage. Chances are you will encounter this animal at some point, so how do we live safely with moose?

Every year hundreds of moose are involved in motor vehicle accidents, accounting for approximately 30% of all moose killed by people. An automobile accident involving a 1200 pound moose can be fatal for the occupants of the vehicle. Most moose/ automobile accidents occur in the dark of early morning or evening, when moose are the most active and traffic is at its heaviest. December and January are the worst accident months due to limited daylight and icy road and snow conditions.

You can avoid an accident with moose by reducing your speed and being aware that moose share our roads especially in winters with heavy snowfalls. Moose are difficult to see on a dark roadway. Unlike deer, their eyes are not very reflective of light and their dark coat appears to absorb light from headlights. In areas of heavy snow, moose quickly learn it is easier to travel along roads rather than through deep snow. Pay attention to road signs that warn of areas where collisions with moose frequently occur.

Driving your vehicle will not be the only time you will encounter a moose. It is almost certain you or your children will come across moose while enjoying the outdoors or during routines such as walking to the school bus stop. Alaska Department of Fish and Game recommends never getting closer than 50 feet to moose and never get between a cow and a calf. Some other Do's and Don'ts include:

- Never tease a moose or throw anything at a moose including snowballs.
- Always keep dogs under control and do not allow them to chase moose. Moose will give chase after dogs and dogs naturally return to their owners along with the angry moose.
- If you encounter a moose make your presence known and allow the moose to wonder off. Find another route around the moose.
- Never feed moose. It is dangerous and it is illegal punishable by a fine up to \$5,000.00 and 1 year in jail.

Using common sense will go a long way towards ensuring you will have a safe and enjoyable experience in Alaska outdoors. Teach your children by being a good example. For additional information contact Army Natural Resources: Ft. Wainwright 361-6490; Ft. Richardson 384-3909 and Ft. Greely 873-1615.